

**Minutes of The Full Council Meeting held at The Rackliff Centre on  
Monday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at 7.30pm**

**Members Present:**

Cllr Liz Ellicott, Chair; Cllr M O'Callaghan, Vice Chair; Cllr A Britcher-Allan, Cllr B Edwards, Cllr A Funnell, Cllr D Funnell, Cllr P Gripper and Cllr D Smith.

**Officers Present:**

Borough Councillor J Sharratt and Alison Stevens, Parish Clerk.

**Others and Members of the Public:**

There were two members of the public present.

- 1. Enquire whether anyone present intends to film, photograph and/or record the meeting**  
No one present filmed, photographed or recorded this meeting.

- 2. To receive and approve apologies for absence**  
Apologies for absence were received from Councillor C Ducklin. The reasons for his apologies were accepted by the Full Council.

- 3. Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests**  
There were no declarations of interests.

- 4. Declarations of Lobbying**  
There were no declarations of lobbying.

- 5. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023**  
The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on the 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023 were agreed, and it was RESOLVED that the Chair sign them as a true and accurate record of the meeting.  
**5.1** Matters outstanding from these minutes (not listed as separate items). None.  
**5.2** Matters outstanding from previous minutes. None.

- 6. Open session for questions from the public**

Ms Foster said:

- The Speedwatch Team has returned after a short break and will carry out three more sessions this week.
- Additional 20 mph signs have been installed by Highways. The poles are legally binding and enforce the 20 mph roundels.
- There was an accident at the bottom of Lower Green Road involving a cyclist recently.
- The new trees have been planted at the Mary Caley playground.

Ms Sharratt, on behalf of the Friends of Rusthall School, thanked the Parish Council for its grant and said the process to order new books has begun.

- 7. Session for County and Borough Councillor on matters concerning the Parish**  
There was no report from the County Councillor on this occasion.

Borough Councillor Britcher-Allan said:

- i. A complaint has been raised with TWBC about an encroachment issue in the High Street. The Planning Enforcement Officer has spoken to the homeowner and strongly suggested the step is removed.
- ii. The Senior Estates Surveyor is working with his colleagues to draw up a licence for cycle racks in Rusthall.

Borough Councillor Sharratt reported:

- i. Following receipt of the Inspector's findings, the Borough Council is proposing that the examination of the Local Plan is progressed with revisions. A six week public consultation on the changes will take place from 15th January to midnight on 26th February 2024.
- ii. Five local good causes across our area have received a share of the £100,000 Community Fund.
- iii. That, along with Councillors Ellicott and Gripper, she will be meeting the Economic Development Manager (Hilary Smith) from TWBC to look at the design proposals for the new cycle route, which will run from Langton Green to Tunbridge Wells Town Centre, via Rusthall.
- iv. She has also been speaking to Ms Smith to find out if Parish Councils can be notified about road closures earlier.

## 8. Finance update

**8.1:** Accounts for Payment – Councillors RESOLVED to pay the following;

				£	
01/02/2024	EE	DD	18.00	Mobile - January	
13/02/2024	Horizon Telecom	BACS	16.61	Anti-Virus	
13/02/2024	TWBC	BACS	936.21	Election Expenses	
13/02/2024	KCS	BACS	39.23	Photocopier Charges	
13/02/2024	Treework Ltd	BACS	336.00	SR Allotments	
13/02/2024	Festive Decorations	BACS	1344.00	Christmas Lights	
13/02/2024	LJR Services	BACS	80.00	Alarm keypad repairs	
13/02/2024	Simon Young	BACS	340.00	Diseased Ash	
13/02/2024	Restyle Paving	BACS	3600.00	Dropped kerb SR	
13/02/2024	SJ Osborne	BACS	1005.89	Locks/keys for WG	
13/02/2024	T Hall	BACS	100.00	Hall hire deposit	
13/02/2024	Capel Groundcare	BACS	449.12	Monthly Contract	
13/02/2024	GTW Services	BACS	36.00	Christmas Lights	
13/02/2024	Milton's Plumbing	BACS	84.00	Drain clearing	
13/02/2024	Little Loads	BACS	30.00	Rubbish clearance	
13/02/2024	Little Loads	BACS	25.00	Rubbish clearance	
13/02/2024	HMRC	BACS	950.85	PAYE	
13/02/2024	NEST	DD	46.65	Pension Contributions	
13/02/2024	KPS	BACS	720.44	Pension Contributions	
13/02/2024	Microshade	BACS	322.44	Hosting fees	
13/02/2024	Horizon Telecom	BACS	16.61	Anti-Virus	
13/02/2024	The Cleaning Lady	BACS	78.00	Cleaning the Rackliff	
13/02/2024	Langton Life Ltd	BACS	750.00	Rusthall Life	
13/02/2024	Ultimate Sparkle	BACS	30.00	Cleaning	
20/02/2024	Employees	BACS	3036.06	February Salaries	
22/02/2024	BT Group PLC	DD	97.49	Telephone Bill	

Councillor Edwards asked the Clerk to check the Horizon listed above is not the same company as the one involved in the Post Office Scandal.

- 8.2 Councillors ratified the decision to transfer £25000 from The Cambridge Account to the Unity Account and RESOLVED to transfer another £30000. The transfer is needed to cover this year's one-off items of expenditure and the increased staffing costs.
- 8.3 The Summary Receipts and Payments Report which shows how the expenditure to date compares to the budgets was received and accepted by all.
- 8.4 The Detailed Receipts and Payments Report which shows the receipts and payments to date was also received and accepted by all.
- 8.5 Budget updates will be considered in more detail at the next meeting.

**9. Allotments Committee –**

- 9.1 It was RESOLVED to adopt the draft minutes of the Allotments Committee Meeting held on the 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023.
- 9.2 The Southwood Road Working Party, which consists of Councillors Ellicott, Gripper and Edwards, has been looking into three possible uses for the land opposite the allotments, namely:
  - 1: A garage for the Boxing Club's minibus.
  - 2: A 'shop' for Flourish (Crossways).
  - 3: Electric Vehicle Charging Points.

Councillor Edwards is getting prices for metal and concrete garages which he will bring to the next meeting along with a formal proposal from the Boxing Club. Volunteers will trim back the tree branches and clear the brush. Councillor Britcher-Allan suggested that a concrete garage could be painted as part of a graffiti scheme. A licence will also need to be arranged with the Boxing Club.

Flourish was originally asking for a permanent shop on the land and has decided to opt for a 'pop up' one to test demand first. The Parish Council is now waiting for a more detailed formal request from them.

Councillor Ellicott has contacted a company called Believ who install Electric Vehicle Charging Points at their own expense because they receive the revenue. They then pay the landowner a small rent. Their representative has looked at the area and said they would prefer to use the car park at Southwood Road so they will approach TWBC first. They are able to provide charging points on the land opposite the allotments but they would require a longer lease. The Rackliff Centre was also considered as a site but the front forecourt is often too full and the rear is often blocked by cars.

- 9.3 It was RESOLVED to approve the quote from Simon Young for £130 which is for the tree surgery costs of stump grinding on WG28. The work to reduce the soil level around the All Ability Path will be carried out by Crossways free of charge.
- 10. Grounds Maintenance Contract 2024-2027 –** It was RESOLVED to approve the Grounds Maintenance Contract for 2024-2027. The Allotments Manager will now seek quotes for the work which will then be considered at the next Full Council Meeting.
- 11. Committee Structure Review –** After much discussion it was RESOLVED that:
- i. Highways issues will be discussed at Full Council so that everyone can have their say.
  - ii. Financial matters will also be discussed at Full Council.

- iii. Planning Meetings will be held before Full Council Meetings. Any planning applications where the consultation deadline falls outside of these meeting dates will be considered on an individual basis and a separate meeting will be called if requested by councillors.
- iv. The Allotment and Environment Committees will continue to run as they are.

The Committee Structures will be reviewed again in six months' time.

- 12. Annual Tree Survey** – Councillors have received two quotes for the works recommended in the Report. The Allotment Manager is now seeking a third because the prices vary considerably. Councillors will then be asked to confirm which they would like to accept and given a deadline of a week to respond. Anyone failing to reply in that time will be deemed to have accepted the majority view.
- 13. Environment Committee** – Rusthall Parish Council RESOLVED to appoint Mr Paul Froome as a co-opted member of its Environment Committee.
- 14. Defibrillator Update** – New children's pads are needed for the defibrillator at Toad Rock. Officer Stevens will order some.
- 15. Highways** – Councillors discussed the Highways Report from the Community Engagement Officer at KCC Highways and the subsequent reply from Councillor Ellicott. The report was in response to the Parish Council's requests:
- i. To reduce the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph on Langton Road
  - ii. For deer and pedestrian warning signs.
- Councillor Ellicott has forwarded the report to Senior KCC Officers and others who may be able to support the Parish Council's cause, such as Sarah Barker from KALC.
- Councillors found the report disappointing and hope that Greg Clarke, MP and County Councillor James McInroy will be able to progress the matter for us.
- 16. Update from the Commons Conservators** – Councillor Gripper reported that:
- i. There has been a lot of tree work carried out at the Commons recently, thanks partly to the great response from voluntary groups.
  - ii. Work is due to begin on the Happy Valley path at the end of March.
- 17. Rusthall Volunteers** – The new website has been set up and Councillor O'Callaghan will find out it is possible to set councillors up as viewers.
- He will also write an open letter to voluntary groups in the parish to ask them if they would like to be included on the website.
- 18. Rusthall Civic Plaque update** – At the last meeting Councillors RESOLVED to include an article asking for nominations that meet the criteria to go in the next edition of Rusthall Life. An article was submitted for the January edition but received no response. The article will now be submitted for the March edition to see if it achieves a better response.
- It was agreed to consider plaques for Dennis Penfold and Mark Rees when they meet the criteria. A book launch was also suggested as a fitting tribute to Dennis Penfold.
- 19. Chair's Report** – Councillor Ellicott wrote to the Chief Executives of One Stop and the Post Office to request a list of One Stop stores which are thriving under the new set up. She will visit two of them with Borough Councillor Sharratt and report back.

20. **Officers' Report** – Officer Stevens has received a response from the Tree Officer at TWBC about the trees on the site next to the Red Lion. He said there is nothing more he can do and TPOs will not be considered unless there is an imminent threat.

21. **Diary Dates**

11 <sup>th</sup> Mar 2024	7.30pm	Full Council Meeting
4 <sup>th</sup> Mar 2024	7.30pm	Allotments Committee Meeting
18 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2024	7.30pm	Parish Assembly
22 <sup>nd</sup> Apr 2024	7.30pm	Environment Committee Meeting

22. **Items for Information** – Councillor Britcher-Allan asked Councillors for suggestions for themes for a photographic event.

23. **Next meeting of Full Council -**

11 <sup>th</sup> Mar 2024	7.30pm	The Rackliff Centre
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DUE TO THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE FOLLOWING ITEM IT WAS RESOLVED TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC UNDER THE PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSIONS TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960.

24. To consider confidential staffing matters and agree any further action.

The Staff Appraisal for the Deputy Clerk was carried out in December and the report was formally accepted.

Following the resignation of Officer Stevens it was resolved to accept her offer to help with the recruitment process ie; help with drafting the vacancy paperwork, receiving applications, identifying suitable candidates, arranging interviews on the Council's behalf and checking references of the successful candidate. The vacancy will be advertised on the KALC website.

There was no further business, and the meeting closed at 9.23pm.

..... Chairman

Dated .....

